

WO-286
Showell
Berlin vicinity
Private

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Showell, Maryland is located approximately four miles north of Berlin along US Route 113 at the intersection of Pitts Road. Shingle Landing Prong is a nearby tributary of the St. Martin's River, which served as an important shipping point through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is not known exactly when a village developed at this crossroads, but St. Martin's Episcopal church has been a fixture in this community since the early eighteenth century. The extant brick church was erected between 1755 and 1759.

Although the community was originally known as St. Martin's, it was changed during the nineteenth century to Showell in honor of Lemuel Showell III, who was partially responsible for funding the Worcester Railroad. Lemuel Showell is also well remembered as an early promoter of Ocean City.

Showell family ownership of land on the south side of the St. Martin's River is traced back to the late seventeenth century. An 800-acre tract named "Cropton" was patented to William Stevens on 18 June 1679 and thereafter assigned to Samuel Showell. Portions of the property were passed down through Showell descendants until the nineteenth century. By the late eighteenth century a tavern was located north of St. Martin's Church along the seaside road at the intersection of the east/west road to Salisbury. On his map drawn in 1794, Dennis Griffith located St. Martin's Church as well as "Hutchings's tavern" in the vicinity of present-day Showell.

Lemuel Showell I (17..-1818) amassed a considerable estate in northern Worcester County through inheritance and purchase of land in and around the St. Martin's River. He obviously capitalized on the lucrative agricultural and timber-related industries during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His holdings were divided between his seven children, but his four sons received the largest share of the property. His oldest son, Josiah, inherited family land along the the Showell mill. William received parts of "Greenland," part of "Cypress Swamp," as well as other property, and to his other son, Lemuel, he left part of the family land "Cropton," part of "Dennises Discovery," in addition to many other tracts. To John, his father bequeathed another part of "Cropton," as well as "Showell's Discovery," totaling 415 acres. By the time of the 1860 U.S. Census Josiah and William were listed with estates of \$100,000 and \$200,000, respectively. Lemuel Showell died the year before the census with his property bequeathed in his 1859 will to his sons, Lemuel and William, who are listed in the census also. At 34 years old, Lemuel's real estate and personal property totaled \$130,000, while his 32-year old brother William was listed with property valued at \$125,000. Both Lemuel and William were identified as merchants. These four Showell men were some of the wealthies men in Worcester County on the eve of the Civil War.

The second half of the nineteenth century brought a rail connection with the Worcester Railroad in the 1870s, later consolidated with other lines to form the Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia Railroad in 1883. Showell Station formerly stood along the railroad right-of-way on the western edge of the crossroads. By the early 1890s the village included fifty residents. Although the population of Showell has not significantly

decreased during the twentieth century, the historic nature of the roadside village has diminished with the construction of a chicken processing plant next to the railroad.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: SHOWELL SURVEY DISTRICT

MHT Inventory Number: WO-286

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

1) Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture
Community Planning

2) Geographic Orientation:

EASTERN SHORE

3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

INDUSTRIAL-URBAN DOMINANCE
(1870-1930)

4) Resource Type(s):

1. SURVEY DISTRICT

A. SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS

B. CHURCHES

C. COMMERCIAL SITES -

1. STORE

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic SHOWELL

and/or common SHOWELL SURVEY DISTRICT

2. Location

street & number US Route 113 and Pitts Road _____ not for publication

city, town Showell _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district First

state Maryland _____ county Worcester

3. Classification

Category☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object**Ownership**☐ public
☒ private
☐ both**Public Acquisition**☐ in process
☐ being considered
☒ not applicable**Status**☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress**Accessible**☐ yes: restricted
☒ yes: unrestricted
☐ no**Present Use**☒ agriculture
☒ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☒ industrial
☐ military☐ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☒ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Various owners

street & number

telephone no.:

city, town

state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio

city, town Snow Hill state Md 21863

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

pository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. W0-286

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☒ moved

date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Showell, Maryland is a small roadside village centered in northern Worcester County along US Route 113 four miles north of Berlin. Pitts Road intersects Route 113 in the center of the village creating a small crossroads. Fifteen (15) buildings, located along the two main roads, date between 1870 and 1940, thereby contributing to the historic nature of the village. The Penn Central Railroad, formerly the Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia Railroad, runs along the west side of the community. Modern intrusions, principally a chicken processing plant and a proposed asphalt plant, detract from the historic character of Showell.

The mid to late nineteenth century houses in Showell follow predictable forms with two-and-a-half, three-bay frame dwellings along with asymmetrical Victorian dwellings. The oldest dwelling is the Lemuel Showell house, estimated to date to the 1830s. Moved to its present location around 1930, the two-story, side hall/parlor dwelling retains many distinctive features including a modillioned cornice with a scalloped and drilled fascia. Also significant is the old Showell store, a two-story bracketed frame commercial structure that incorporates an early nineteenth century section. Located along Pitts Road is the Showell United Methodist Church, a tee-shaped frame structure distinguished by a corner entrance and bell tower.

8. Significance

Survey No. W0-286

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	
and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Showell, Maryland is located approximately four miles north of Berlin along **46** Route 113 at the intersection of Pitts Road. Shingle Landing Prong is a nearby tributary of the St. Martin's River, which served as an important shipping point through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is not known exactly when a village developed at this crossroads, but St. Martin's Episcopal church has been a fixture in this community since the early eighteenth century. The present brick structure was erected between 1755 and 1759.

The village of Showell is named for the Showell family of Worcester County who owned land on the south side of the St. Martin's River as early as the late seventeenth century. An 800-acre tract named "Cropton" was patented to William Stevens on 18 June 1679 and thereafter assigned to Samuel Showell. Portions of the property were passed down through Showell descendants until the nineteenth century. By the late eighteenth century a tavern was located north of St. Martin's Church along the seaside road at the intersection of the east/west road to Salisbury. On his map drawn in 1794, Dennis Griffith located St. Martin's Church as well as "Hutchings's Tavern" in the vicinity of present-day Showell.

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(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. W0-286

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification _____

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian

organization Worcester County date 3/1/89

street & number Worcester County Courthouse telephone 301-632-1194

city or town Snow Hill state MD 21863

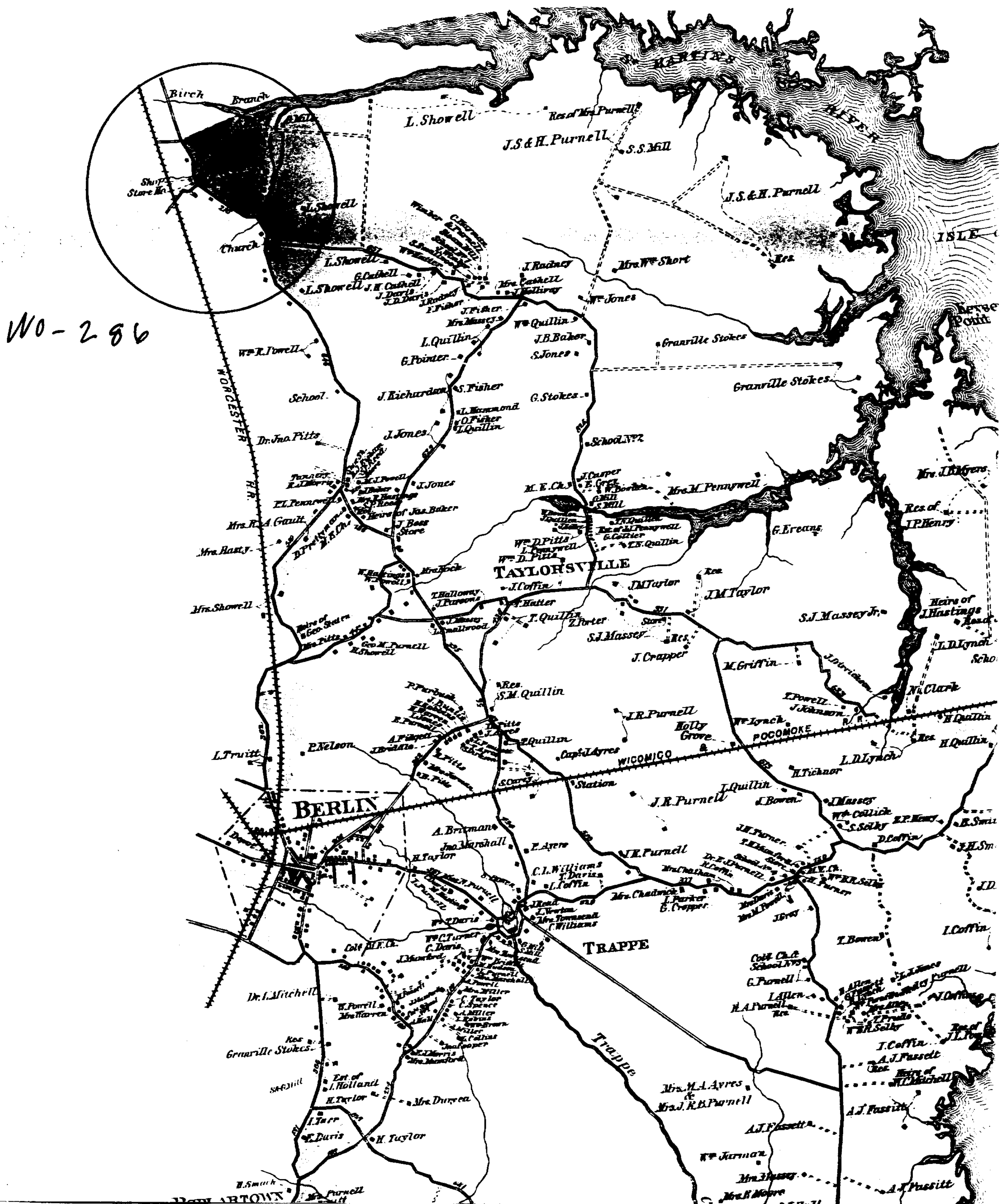
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

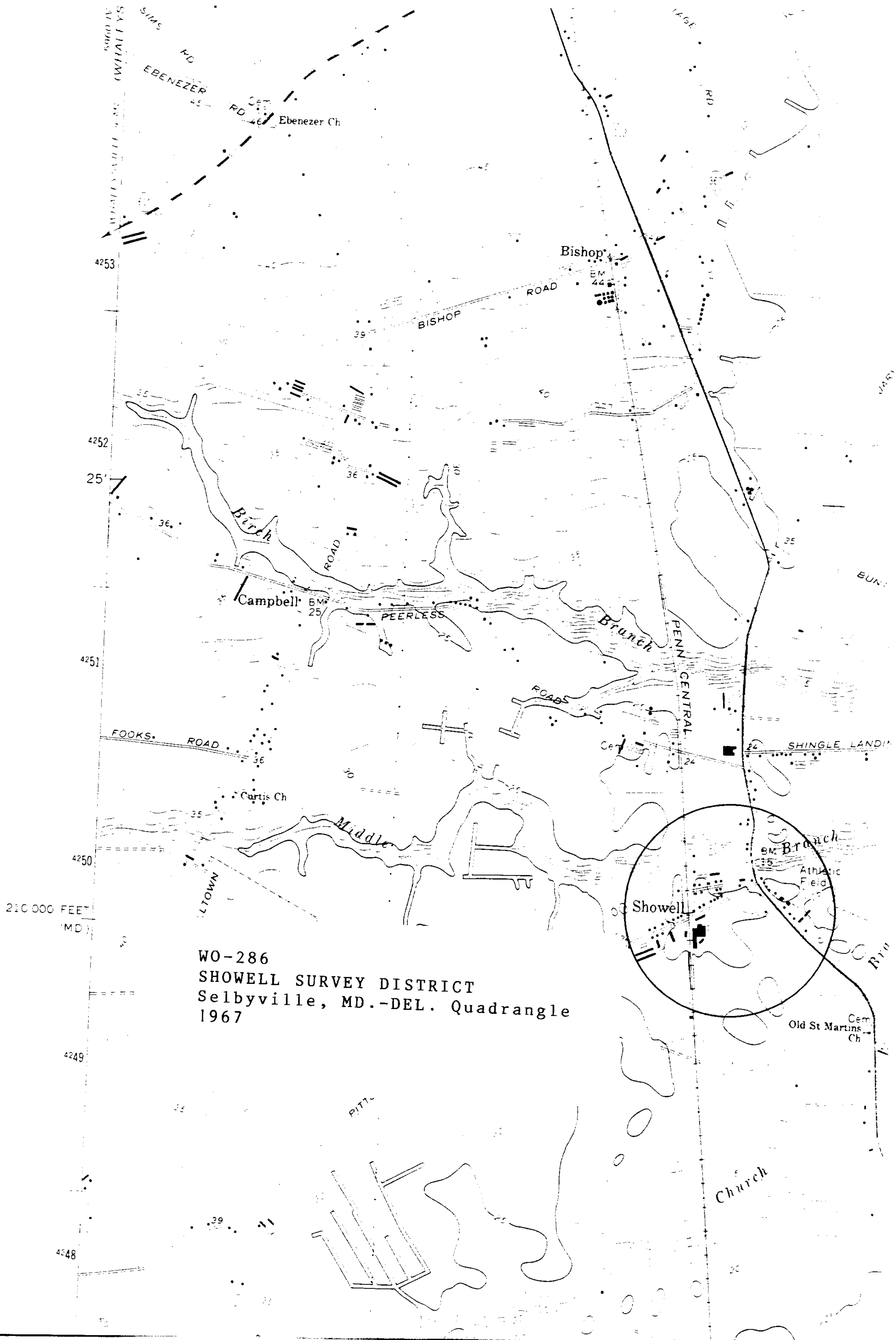
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

SHOWELL SURVEY DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The second half of the nineteenth century brought a rail connection with the Worcester Railroad in 1870s, later consolidated with other lines to form the Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia Railroad in 1883. Showell Station formerly stood along the railroad right-of-way on the western edge of the crossroads. By the early 1890s the village included fifty residents. Although the population of Showell has not significantly decreased during the twentieth century, the historic nature of the roadside village has diminished with the construction of a chicken processing plant next to the railroad.





WO-286
SHOWELL SURVEY DISTRICT
Selbyville, MD.-DEL. Quadrangle
1967